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C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 001189

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/28/2015

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SUBJECT: MALDIVES: MAJOR SHIFT IN PRESIDENT'S CABINET
EXPECTED

Classified By: AMB. J. LUNSTEAD FOR REASONS 1.4(b) and (d)

1. (C) On July 7, poloff met in Male with members of the recently registered Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) that opposes the current government. MDP official Ali Hashim told poloff that he had met with Presidential Spokesman Ahmed Shaheed and requested that the President's office compromise by giving MDP supporters in the Majlis (parliament) the portfolios for Home Affairs, Information, Trade, and Atolls. Hashim said he did not believe that the MDP would gain all of these Ministries, but he seemed confident that a cabinet shake-up was imminent. He expected 40 percent or less of the cabinet to turn over, but he did not say whether he expected the MDP to gain any of the newly vacated seats in the cabinet.

2. (C) Earlier that day, Shaheed told poloff that on July 6, the President met with him, the Attorney General, and several advisors. The meeting lasted for five hours and covered a massive shift in the President's cabinet. Shaheed said to expect an 80-90 percent turn-over of current cabinet ministers, and that the news will be made public July 10 or

11. While Shaheed did not give names of cabinet members leaving or of their replacements, he stressed the need for change at a moderate pace and expressed an intention to bring more progressive elements and officials into the government. He mentioned talking to MDP members on a personal, rather than an official level, and did not specify whether the MDP would receive any of the open cabinet positions.

3. (U) Septel on political climate in Maldives to follow.

LUNSTEAD